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ONE

# THE EAST AND WEST REVIEW



AN ANGLICAN OVERSEAS QUARTERLY

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THE CONTRIBUTION OF EDUCATED AFRICAN  
WOMEN TO THE UGANDA OF TO-DAY      Helen M. Neatby

COMMUNICATION IS THE CHURCH'S TASK      Clifton Ackroyd

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THE GENIUS OF CHRIST      Kenneth Cragg

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ONE SHILLING

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## “THE FLYING ANGEL”

It is the task of the Church to take the Gospel to all men. She cannot fulfil her vocation if she neglects those whom the business of seafaring takes from Home and Church.

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THE MISSIONS TO SEAMEN URGENTLY NEEDS  
THE HELP OF MISSIONARY-HEARTED PEOPLE

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## THE MISSIONS TO SEAMEN

4, Buckingham Palace Gardens, London, S.W.1

Rev. CYRIL BROWN, Gen. Superintendent.

Commander H. SELBY ASH, R.N., Sec.

### “... There Came a Leper”

Once more, after four years, the work of our former leper Home at Jerusalem has been re-established, and amongst the Arab patients are seven or eight who, formerly in our Jerusalem Home have, like so many more, wandered the streets to mix with all and sundry without supervision.

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The Healing and Helping Hand,

will you also aid us in the renewal of our work in the Holy Land.

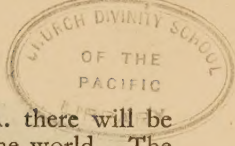
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# EDITORIAL



*Minneapolis and Evanston.*—Next month in the U.S.A. there will be two great meetings of Christians from many parts of the world. The first is the Anglican Congress at Minneapolis from August 4th-13th, and the second is the Assembly of the World Council of Churches from August 15th-31st.

At Minneapolis there will be Metropolitans, Bishops, Clergy and Laity, from almost all the twenty-two provinces and 328 Dioceses of the Anglican Communion, to study "The Call of God and the Mission of the Anglican Communion"—its Vocation, Worship, Message and Work. The speakers from this country will include the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, the Bishop of Sheffield, the Dean of Lincoln, Dr. Kathleen Bliss and the Rev. J. P. Hickinbotham.

About 120 delegates are going from Great Britain and many of these will afterwards attend the Evanston Congress as delegates, consultants or accredited visitors.

This second World Council of Church's Assembly at Evanston will represent Churches from forty-five countries with a total membership of over 160 million people. Its main theme, "Christ the Hope of the World," will be studied in relation to Faith and Order, Evangelism, Special Problems, International Affairs, Inter-Group Relations and Vocation. But it will also review the work of the Council's departments in the last six years and plan for the years ahead.

Both these Assemblies need the interest and attention of Christians throughout the world, and the utmost support in prayer. At diocesan conferences and at various meetings arranged throughout the dioceses the delegates on their return will convey the message and the experience of Minneapolis and Evanston to the Church at home. Arrangements have also been made for both popular reports and comprehensive reports of the Congress and the Assembly to be published as early as possible in the autumn.

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# THE CONTRIBUTION OF EDUCATED AFRICAN WOMEN TO THE UGANDA OF TO-DAY

By HELEN M. NEATBY\*

**T**HERE are now in Uganda thousands of women who may be termed "educated," inasmuch as they have been long enough at school to have some fruitful experience of ordered community life, some conception of places and people beyond their own villages, some training in systematic effort, and, most important of all, a realization that there are vast fields of knowledge they have not explored but about which it is possible to learn through books and teachers. Of these, hundreds have added to the treasures of their school days the professional skill of nurses or teachers. But there is a further group, certainly not more than fifty in all, which has gone just a little beyond the rest in experience or in formal education or in both, in most cases having studied at Makerere College or overseas. It is to them that we look for that elusive quality called "leadership," and it is with them, whom we may conveniently term "highly educated" women, that this article is concerned, for their importance is out of all proportion to their numbers, and would be difficult to overestimate. But to enter sympathetically into their contributions and their needs one must know what kind of training they have had and against what background their struggles have taken place.

All Uganda women who have received any kind of education have spent some years in primary mission schools, tackling the six-year course, and for this special group one may assume a further period of study in a secondary school. But only a very few of them will have completed the six-year secondary course. Most will have received considerable informal education through Church life, and some will have benefited from the Women's Clubs which the Government's Social Welfare workers have helped to organize in the more populous areas. Nearly all have been trained and certificated as nurses or as teachers to qualify for the "highly-educated" group largely by virtue of being competent to teach in secondary schools or to fill the posts of ward sisters in our hospitals. About twenty have completed courses at Makerere College, but mostly "special courses," for so far only a small trickle of women have been

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able to enter on the same terms as the men. One of the ex-Makerere students is now studying for a History degree at Oxford, and if she is successful in her "finals" this year will be Uganda's first African woman graduate. But all the women who have gone overseas for further study, sponsored by Church or Government, must be included in the group. Qualifications have already been won in Great Britain by two nurses, one teacher and one social worker, whilst those now studying in English hospitals and teacher training colleges include one assistant education officer from the Government service and five teachers engaged on further professional studies. Special overseas experiences have given a few other women an outlook and a status well beyond their rather meagre academic training; for instance, two have spent nine months in the United States to gain a knowledge of Y.W.C.A. aims and methods, while one came to England to play in the film "Man of Two Worlds."

What, then, can this handful of women be expected to give to their country that they should be esteemed so significant? Most of them are only between twenty-five and thirty years of age, and several are absorbed in the cares of a young family. Traditionally, the unmarried African woman has no place in the community, and the young wife and mother is expected to keep quiet, reserved and preoccupied with her domestic duties. The "old" women, that is, those whose children have become fully adult, often become "wise women," as in Old Testament history. They may exert a tremendous power, not only in the affairs of their families, but also in public life. No one can live many years in Buganda without realizing how often kings and ministers have acted under the influence of "the old women of the palace." Doubtless the tyranny of the distaff has many times been wielded for good, yet in general it is felt to be sinister and secret, working in darkness to control the lives of men. Against such a background must the educated young women establish themselves in positions of candid leadership, and many men, both African and European, believe the task to be impossible. They regard higher education as, at best, a personal benefit to a woman, and also a professional advantage, if she be a spinster; no more. That a married woman should follow a profession, as the educated women of West Africa normally do, is not acceptable to the Africans of Uganda.

On us, European would-be friends of African women, lies the responsibility of helping them to find ways of enriching the life of their people. To do this we must try to understand, first, the kinds of service they can render, provided only the doors can be held open, and, secondly, their own special needs, which must be met if they are to be wise and strong for the performance of their tasks.

Of doors to service which are opened by higher education the most obvious is the professional. Nor is this door so likely to be closed by ignorance and prejudice. The African girl who can take full responsibility in a hospital ward or who can teach in schools at the secondary level is performing a much-needed service, especially in making possible the training of more girls as teachers and nurses, whether she carries out that work herself or releases a European to do it. But she is significant beyond the narrow limits of her job. She is raising the status

of women in the eyes of African society, and doing it in the only permanently effective way, by trained and intelligent service. Nowhere is her value more plainly seen than in the so-called co-educational schools. Here, all too often, the boys and girls mix in class. But the African staff is male, with perhaps one or two girl teachers of the younger children, who never dare to raise their voices in the councils of the community. The lack of prestige of the women staff is often reflected in an attitude of near-contempt from the masters to their girl pupils. So the vicious circle is perpetuated till an educated woman, who can hold her own with her male colleagues in a friendly and dignified way, is appointed to the staff.

Such a woman's contribution is not one whit less useful if she marries. African men are usually determined not to marry girls as well-educated as they are themselves. I once talked with a young Makerere graduate who was uncertain which of two young ladies to ask for. Both were teachers, but I was able to tell him that probably one would have had eight years of education and the other ten. "I think," said he, "that eight years of education is enough for my wife. Such a girl will not shame me by her ignorance, but she will be willing to submit herself to my judgment in all things." From his own point of view he was probably right.

They will not only be worthy partners for cultured Christian men; they will be able to open windows for their children, through whom their influence will spread further yet. So often Europeans deplore the African's lack of initiative, and not without cause. But the African child who is brought up to play games, to handle toys and to look at pictures develops initiative just as his English counterpart does.

Outside the home there are now richer and more varied forms of service awaiting the trained woman than were to be found even ten years ago. Church life is perhaps still the most important sphere for her leadership, especially in Uganda, where the Catholics have African sisterhoods which carry great social responsibilities, and where the Native Anglican Church has made such a deliberate and conscious effort to put more and more control into African hands. Mothers' Unions must have African leaders, or they will generate a dependent attitude and become a source of weakness rather than strength. In secular life the educated women can find great opportunities in the Village Women's Clubs, now rapidly spreading all over the country. In the Uganda Council of Women, which concerns itself with such questions as housing, juvenile delinquency, prison reform, the legal and economic status of women, provident funds and household management, the bulk of the African women sit silent while policies are framed. Only the few can really hold their own with European and Asian women and speak for their sisters in the deliberations of committees. Local and Central governments still present to women many closed doors at which most are too shy to knock. No African woman has yet sat on the Legislative Council, but it is only in the last year that two European women have been given seats, and it is of first importance that Africans should be deserving of like privilege. On district councils and education authorities



it is not uncommon to find one African woman member, but she is usually ineffective; too shy because of her isolation and too diffident because of her ignorance to take any active part. On women trained for leadership and with a high degree of education must fall the burden of public duties for many years to come.

But the primary task of an educated woman is to introduce into Uganda's social life, before it is too late, these new elements which it is woman's privilege to appreciate. A deep caring for individuals is desperately needed in Africa to-day. Already its emerging societies are producing politicians, newspaper men, social reformers, and even business magnates. But Uganda will be a hard, inhuman place if its women have not called us to have compassion on the needy. What are our new African leaders planning for the aged, the imbecile, the blind, the victims of accident or misfortune? What do they propose for the enriching of the lives of ordinary men and women, who now can hope for so little beyond the round of eating, begetting and dying? In Uganda, just as in England, the men have, on the average, a better instinct for public administration, and for dealing with humanity in bulk. The women have a more lively consciousness of the individual needs of those private persons who make up the mass. What a bright hope the future will hold if the educated African men and women can form a living partnership and go forward together!

The Africans are being called upon to frame a new society, not because they have ceased to be satisfied with the old one, but because the old one is broken past any mending. The patterns of tribal living are shattered, and new emotional patterns must be found and found quickly. Obviously it is no accident that the women are showing themselves even more eager than the men in defence of chiefs and princes, and of those rites and ceremonies which hedge them round. They do not reason about their significance, but they feel deeply the importance to ordinary folk of having great chiefs to care about, and a pattern for the expression of that caring. Women are the natural conservatives, and granted some training of their critical faculties, they can do great service in preserving customs and traditions which will give warmth, stability and graciousness to the new society. Without their influence the African of to-morrow will find no "wholeness" of life. Rather will men realize, too late, that they have "made a desert and called it peace."

But if so great a responsibility does indeed lie on the shoulders of Uganda's handful of educated women can we help them to fulfil it? To a great extent they must find their own solutions for problems which Europeans can so imperfectly understand. But I believe that there are two ways in which we have it in our power to give them much needed aid; first, by raising their status in the eyes of African society, and, secondly, by taking with deep seriousness the problem of their loneliness and isolation.

At present an unmarried woman—and more than half our highly-educated women seem likely to remain unmarried—has not so much a low place in her community as no place at all. In a polygamous age all women were married, and the new Africa has not yet learnt to recognize



the existence of honourable spinsterhood. A woman who tries to rent a room near her professional work is assumed to be a bad woman by her neighbours and only too often by the police. Nor is she "respectable" if she lives with a family to which she is not closely related. In many areas customs of land inheritance make it very difficult for her to provide a house and "shamba" for her old age. Even if she is fortunate enough to be economically secure she is almost certain to be very lonely and regarded as a queer outsider. Of course the educated woman who marries has a recognized place in society, but it is seldom the one to which her abilities entitle her. Often she is so busy at home, largely with such tasks as water-carrying which should surely have been abolished long ago, that she has not the time to take her place in the wider life of the community. Even if she makes the time she is still liable to be treated as an inferior, instead of being helped to overcome her diffidence and make her voice heard on local or central councils. Africans and Europeans alike feel very broad-minded if they have nominated one woman to a committee or education authority, and are too often happy to leave it at that, making little or no effort to help the poor, lonely woman to contribute freely and constructively. A big change in European opinion on the place of these women in public life is badly needed; at present we show a dubious example to the African man, who in his turn is only too glad to tell himself that no radical change in his attitude is needed.

But a radical change in the position of unmarried women is going to come very slowly at best. It is urgent that we help them to find new strength for their difficult service through an enriching common life. The Roman Catholics have already solved, in large measure, the problems of their single women by the creation of Orders of African women on the model of the European sisterhoods. These give to the Africans unique opportunities for leadership. The Mother-General of the Banabikira has the most responsible position ever held by a Muganda woman. But to all alike, not only to the exceptional few, the Orders give training for responsibility, companionship, a relatively ordered and gracious way of living, and the complete security of a home always ready to receive them, whether in sickness or in health, in working prime or in old age. There is an urgent need for the Protestant women to have some form of community which offers comparable disciplines and opportunities. Indeed, the Native Anglican Church might surely go further than the Catholics have yet done and create an Order which would be shared in by both African and European women, living in Christian sisterhood. Such an Order would be in many ways very different from those fostered by the Catholic missions, and perhaps its Mother-house, presumably in Kampala, might develop into a kind of African St. Julian's, which affords rest and refreshment to so many, and serves so often as a conference place or a retreat house. But its first concern would be to provide a focus for the lives of all its members of whatever race, where they could fulfil their need for a home and draw inspiration for their united service. Some members would leave the Order for marriage or other personal reasons; many would find their work in some place distant from the Mother-house, which they would visit only at long intervals; all would

know that their welcome was complete and unconditional whenever they came home.

Uganda needs desperately what its educated women, and only they, can give her. The married women have their homes to give them the stability and affection they need, if they are to give richly to others. For the unmarried women, too, a house must be provided, or both they and the society which so urgently needs their service will suffer heavy loss. We dare not miss so fruitful an opportunity.

## REVIEW

*INTRODUCTION TO THE QUR'ĀN.* By Richard Bell, formerly Reader in Arabic, University of Edinburgh. Edinburgh University Publications No. 6. 18s. net.

This is a book whose publication all students of Islam have been patiently anticipating for many years. It is more than ancillary to Dr. Bell's two-volume translation of the Qur'ān, which has now taken its place among the recognized English versions. Chapter 5 in particular will be a guide to the textual criticism on which that translation was based.

The Introduction consists of eight chapters, the first of which is a model of compression, providing the essential material to initiate the student into the religious and historical background of the Qur'ān "so closely related to the life of Muhammad."

The following three chapters are devoted to "Origin," "Form," "Structure and Style." Here the author is frank in his presentation of the facts as he came to see them over long years of grappling. "Some things in the Qur'ān seem to be there by accident; others may have disappeared. There is no reason, however, to assume that anything of importance has gone astray; one rather has the impression that pieces which were never meant to be preserved have found their way into the book as finally fixed." "We can at least discern something of the way in which Muhammed inspired and guided the nascent community of Islam." Many will also agree with Dr. Bell's conclusion that because "Muhammad began by stressing the beneficent power of Allah" we can unravel some of the main strands which have entered into Quranic composition. Dr. Bell thinks that in most passages where the word itself occurs *qur'ān* seems to refer to "a collection of recitations already delivered or in process of being delivered." This leads to a disquisition on the "teaching," where Dr. Bell's verdict is that "characteristic of the Qur'ān is the reaction from pagan ideas." It is in this connection that the Biblical literature is considered in its relation to Islamic beginnings. "Of the New Testament Muhammad never seems to have acquired any intimate knowledge. The Gospel parables, one feels, would have appealed to him had he known them, but few of them find any echo in the Qur'ān."

No Theological College in the west, as it surveys in its Church History teaching the "Rebuke of Islam" centuries ago with the challenge of the present time, can afford to be without this book.

E. F. F. B.



# COMMUNICATION IS THE CHURCH'S TASK

By CLIFTON ACKROYD\*

**I**T is reported that an American recently stood gazing up at work in progress some fifty floors up on a skyscraper when a brick became detached and floated earthwards with the correct acceleration laid down by the Law of Gravity. The man in question continued to gaze unmoved, until eventually the brick collided with his face, whereon he was rendered incapable of movement, and in due course was conveyed to hospital. Here it was later discovered that frequent attendance at three-dimensional cinemas had conditioned him against ducking to avoid approaching objects! This admittedly extreme instance reminds us that we are living in a visual age: an era when all sorts of picture techniques impinge upon us, either by our choice, as when we go to a cinema or switch on the television or buy a picture magazine, or without our choice, as when we absorb subconsciously the burden of an advertisement in newspaper or on hoarding. Educationists and others deplore a real or imaginary decline in reading habits, brought about, allegedly, by the increased pandering to human laziness by the provision of pictures to entertain, to educate, to influence and to inform. Man's earliest attempts at recording his thoughts were pictures, which by a slow process became formalized (for compactness and convenience) and so via symbols and hieroglyphics came alphabets and written language—undoubtedly the most precise and flexible vehicle for complex ideas. To revert to pictures seems to many people a retrogression. Yet languages are many, picture language is virtually universal; written language demands a laborious educational process, pictures a much shorter one; it is a fact that the pictures can be used to aid the processes of education itself.

Visual methods are no new thing; the principal claim of this age to be a visual age lies in the multiplicity of new techniques for using pictures. The media are not in themselves to be deplored or applauded (being efficient for particular purposes), but the content of the message carried may be either good or bad. In so far as entertainment films exalt shoddy values and debase human dignity, they are harmful; to the extent that they exalt the correct human values, they carry out the Church's task. Similarly there is a place for advertising which is truthful and factual; propaganda (a word Christian in origin, but completely debased by association with improper use) can be used for men's good, and in education pictures and picture techniques have a positive contribution to make. There is some danger to-day of regarding these methods as an end rather than a means, but if they are uncompromisingly regarded as aids, particularly in teaching and propaganda, their value can hardly be overestimated.

\* Mr. Clifton Ackroyd is Secretary of the Edinburgh House Bureau for Visual Aids.

Communication is the business of the Church. The Church which led in education and in influencing for good the lives of men down through history since its early days, and in doing so made full use of symbolism and picture techniques through stained glass, through beautiful stone, through drama, somehow lost its lead at the beginning of this century. The discovery of moving pictures, which the Lumiere brothers hoped would contribute greatly to education, was left to the exploitation of the entertainment world and the Church still sadly lags behind in the use of this medium. In recent years increasing and very valuable use has been made of a wide range of media, film, exhibition, projected and non-projected pictures, in Christian and missionary propaganda. The Church has still to come to terms with some of these media, and this is urgent because the Church must communicate to live. A great proportion of the twenty-five million people who attend the cinemas of Britain at least once a week never go to church, never read a religious article, switch the radio off at the first sign of Christian content. These people must be reached through the media *they* choose, and ways must be found to use those media. Meanwhile one can but applaud the examples of proper use of 16 mm. sound film, filmstrip, flannelgraph increasingly taking place with various Christian and near-Christian groups. The missionary societies have a special place in this advance and their particular contribution to evangelism in this country is the provision of interesting and moving materials which show the Church in action in the trouble spots of the world; which thereby show that the Church is relevant; if a man is convinced that the Church is relevant somewhere he is open to the conviction that it is relevant here, and to him.

There is an increasing recognition of the value of visual methods not only here, in America and on the Continent, but also for the evangelistic task of the out-reaching Church in the backward areas of the world. The Americans have for some four years now been organizing the use of mass communication methods overseas through the Radio, Visual Education and Mass Communication Committee of the N.C.C.U.S.A. The British societies have had no organized approach hitherto. Last year RAVEMCCO sent a deputation to Africa and invited the Conference of British Missionary Societies to attach a member, and in this capacity I joined the four-man deputation. The purpose of the deputation was to survey selected areas in Africa; to hold conferences and institutes with persons and groups interested in the use of audio-visual media for evangelism; to seek African candidates for audio-visual scholarship study in the United States; to explore the ways and means of enlisting the skills and talents of nationals and foreign missionaries in the production of indigenous aids; to report to RAVEMCCO, and the British missionary societies, making recommendations for the development of audio-visual programmes through the audio-visual aids committees of Christian Councils. These would be related to RAVEMCCO and the Conference of British Missionary Societies; and work in close co-operation with church and mission agencies already engaged in adult literacy, literature production, public health; the Christian Home Movement, agricultural extension, and other movements.

Permeating all these specific goals was the purpose to stir the imagina-



tion of Christian workers in Africa and to deepen the conviction of associated leaders in Europe, Great Britain and North America that we are blessed with an array of tools for the great task of going into all the world to spread the knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Conferences and institutes were held in the Gold Coast, Nigeria, French Cameroons, Belgian Congo, Angola, the Union of South Africa, Mozambique, Southern and Northern Rhodesia, Kenya, and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. The deputation encountered various degrees of progress in the use of audio-visual materials and also varying degrees of co-operation between mission and church agencies and between church and government. They found, too, and quite naturally, considering the comparative newness of mass communication media for evangelism, differing degrees of enthusiasm for audio-visual techniques among the missionary personnel. There was, however, no doubt left in the minds of the members of the deputation that the African is ready, willing and eager for a much stepped-up audio-visual programme. Even in areas where the Government is doing an "adequate" job there is still a great and recognized need for audio-visual resource in churches, schools, hospitals and in village and industrial evangelism. In most cases governments and industry will welcome and endorse such help as the Church is willing to give, from flat pictures to the operation of mobile units and radio stations. That the Church has been laggard in taking advantage of the opportunity afforded for the spread of the Christian Gospel in Africa to-day is painfully evident in such instances as the following: In South Africa one mission has a well-equipped mobile unit. It lies idle because of lack of operational funds and personnel! In Nigeria, of five projectors in mission hands, none is used to anything like its potential, and one is in complete disuse.

The deputation found a great demand for pictures in Africa—any kind of pictures—posters and charts, flat pictures for wall decoration, for home and family use. Some have been imported; others locally produced. All are used with great effect. The spoken word may go in one ear and out the other, but augmented by pictures it is not readily forgotten. The flannelgraph, one of the simplest visual teaching aids, and one sometimes not too highly regarded in sophisticated educational circles, is very popular. Easy to carry, easy to use, easy to teach even the unlettered to use, they can be imported if there is enough money, but if there isn't they can be made by loving hands at home. Flannelgraphs have become an invaluable visual resource, especially in places where electricity for use with projected pictures is not available. However, the efficacy of this simple tool can be greatly enhanced by more thorough training in its production and use. Slides, filmstrips and films from overseas or made in Africa are also in demand. A curious situation obtains in Africa; whereas many church workers have projectors, there are not nearly enough films available for their consistent use. More film libraries must be established and well stocked. Mobile units, now used extensively by Government, industry, and Roman Catholic missions wherever there are roads to accommodate them, must be provided for the evangelical church along with funds and trained personnel to carry the programme. Kenya is already going ahead with plans along these lines.

It is impossible to compress into a few pages of general observations and recommendations the experiences of the team on a ten-week tour of so varied and interesting a nature. Obviously the RAVEMCCO deputation did not study the social, economic and political conditions in Africa. Our problem was to ascertain the prevailing use and the possible future use of mass communication media. Yet the deputation did realize that the social and racial problems could not be entirely disregarded, and repeatedly we discussed them amongst ourselves and with others. Meanwhile, as regards our specific assignment, the deputation reports the following observations :

1. Throughout Africa there is an unbelievable scarcity of picture materials. The *Pictures for Children Everywhere* project of the World Council for Christian Education has been very helpful, but the number of pictures sent has been far too small. One Christian Council executive expressed his hope that in his country there would be a Christian picture in every Christian home, serving as a "conversation starter" with non-Christian friends and guests of the household. The fact is that, at present, even the churches and schools do not have adequate picture resources for teaching.

2. There is a great opportunity for the use of flannelgraph, wall pictures, etc., by the African pastors and teachers. The Sunday Schools would be greatly helped with these media as graphic illustrations. There is a need for getting such materials into the hands of the Africans and training them in media use.

3. A surprising number of projectors can be found in the various missions. Notwithstanding, their effectiveness is far below their potential because of, among other reasons, (a) an almost total lack of religious films and filmstrips, and (b) technical difficulties due to climate, etc. . . .

4. There is no uniformity of experience. The Church goes to those who have never seen a picture of any kind and for whom the idea of pictorial representation must be established. The Church also contacts those who have seen commercial motion pictures and have learned the language of photography. It follows that some foreign-produced materials may be used in Africa ; but other materials must be *produced in Africa*.

5. There is a considerable use of mobile audio-visual units by business and Government agencies. . . . Meantime it is indisputable that the missions in Africa stand in a noble line of pioneers and explorers. One is stirred to contemplate the impact which would have been made by the early missionaries had they been able to avail themselves of the modern media of communication, and one desires to see the Church again taking the lead in the influencing of men's minds in Africa.

6. Gramophone records have unusual appeal for the African. Hand-wound gramophones go to villages where electricity has never been known and recordings in many vernaculars are widely available from America. Some are now being produced in Britain.

7. Radio is a force in the developing of ideas and a national conscience. It will be increasingly so. At the moment its use for religion follows colonial politics, though in some areas, notably in Nigeria, the religious



transmissions are very considerable and among the most popular programmes going out.

8. Co-operation among the various churches and the mission groups is excellent. The Christian Councils are strong and inclusive. Their leadership is extraordinarily capable. Their potentiality in co-ordinating the use of mass communication methods cannot be over-estimated.

Africans must be trained to lead the Church in the use of these modern media. They can be. We were greatly impressed by the very large number of trained Africans in Government radio and film work in the Belgian Congo. Christian communication demands not only skill in the use of techniques, but also deep sensitivity to the needs and hopes of the people to be reached and a thorough knowledge and experience of the Christian message.

The points at which training in modern communication methods should be introduced for overseas nationals are : (a) in the theological training colleges, (b) in the teacher training colleges, (c) at denominational conferences, (d) at Christian Council conferences, (e) at specially called conferences at various key points in an area. European missionaries must also be trained, and such training is being actively developed by certain British missionary societies for personnel on furlough. There is a considerable and obvious case for such training courses to be run on co-operative lines, available to missionaries from all denominations.

The sort of training envisaged for nationals detailed above, as well as all the other work of an audio-visual aids programme under a National Christian Council, equally demand a full-time leader with the necessary training skills. Appeals are being made to the constituent societies of certain Christian Councils, and it is likely that some American societies will release personnel on salary for this purpose. For some years now three Americans, released in this way by three different societies, have worked as full secretaries of the audio-visual aids programme of the Christian Council of India. One of these, Dr. D. F. Ebright, made a great contribution as a member of the Africa deputation. In French Equatorial Africa an American Presbyterian missionary, employed as Visual Aids Organizer for this mission in that area, is seconded to the Federation for oversight of co-operative developments.

But RAVEMCCO has an even bolder vision, implemented by its scholarship programme. They see trained nationals as the ideal leaders in the field of communications. A number of such men, of high calibre and good education, have taken university courses in Communication in the U.S.A. and have gone back to their countries to lead the National Christian Council visual aids programmes. Since the deputation's visit to Africa a Nigerian has been chosen for similar training, and will, it is hoped, assume responsibility in due course for Christian mass communications in his country. This is a development of great promise, and steps should be taken by British societies to undertake in Britain similar training of key personnel.

What is all this planning and strategy about ? Do these newer methods really help to spread the Kingdom ? One night in Angola a ten-foot wide brilliant oblong of light shone out on the whitewashed end wall of a school, and figures flitted through the darkness towards it like moths

to a flame. Music and verbal invitations came from the public address loud-speakers flanking this impromptu screen. Quite quickly a crowd of fifteen hundred people had crowded round. A film was screened : a straightforward film illustrating a part of the Gospel story, entitled *Last Journey to Jerusalem*. The commentary was in the vernacular—Umbundu. The crowd watched with wrapt attention as the story unfolded : through the healing of the blind man, the curiosity of Zacchæus, the triumphant ride to Jerusalem, our Lord with the children in the temple. After the film an explanation was given by an African pastor over the speakers, whilst his fellow pastors from the training school moved among the crowd making personal contacts. The vernacular commentary had been recorded direct on to the magnetic strip of the film by one of these same pastors earlier that day after he had heard the English optical sound-track several times. The same film had a new commentary in a different language recorded on it many times during our travels. What a potentiality has this new magnetic strip film in multi-lingual Africa !

All this equipment was transported in Angola in the back of a truck ; in the Chad area a missionary was taking similar equipment with a file of bearers far beyond the reach of roads ; his portable generator provided electricity. But this is elaborate and expensive. Similar results on a more simple scale I saw often obtained with a filmstrip projector using a paraffin lamp as illuminant in the Belgian Congo, in the Gold Coast, and elsewhere. The real solution would be if almost every African pastor and teacher had his flannel backcloth and set of figures, as some groups we trained now have. A woman who years ago visited a remote village and told Gospel stories with flannelgraph recently returned there. She was greeted with shouts as "the picture woman" and incidents from her stories were gleefully remembered. Would a verbal message hold so long ?

And the simple picture, what of that ? An Indian came to the evangelist's house asking for a drink of water. He saw a picture of Jesus and asked, "Who is that Man ?" The evangelist explained his own position as one who tries to show people what God wants them to do. "We know what God wants us to do because He sent His Son to earth to live a perfect life. That is a picture of the man He sent. We call Him Christ, which means 'sent by God'." The Indian had never heard of Him. The evangelist brought from his simple box of supplies an album of pictures collected over the years and with them illustrated the old, new story. Next day the man returned to buy a Testament. "The stories you told me," he said, "I want to read them for myself."



# THE PRETORIA CONFERENCE

An Assessment by C. T. WOOD\*

**I**N a series of articles on South Africa recently appearing in the *Manchester Guardian* Mr. Tingsten, the distinguished editor of a Swedish paper, summarizes the attitude of the leaders of the Dutch Reformed Church as one of sincerity and honesty in spite of theories which are preposterous. This might well serve as a warning in attempting a preliminary survey of the Conference held in Pretoria last November at the instigation of the Federal Missionary Council of the Dutch Reformed Church. The terms of reference were the application of Christian principles in a multi-racial land and representatives of all the leading non-Roman bodies were invited. The complete series of papers delivered is not yet available, and until these are published any assessment must be tentative. But there is now sufficient material available to warrant a survey of the main points of view represented.

Since the Dutch Reformed Church, ignoring for a moment its various branches, reflects most nearly the official policy of the Nationalist Government and is the Church of the majority of the European population (non-Europeans were not invited to the Conference), it would be well to start with it. For it will be found that many of the non-D.R.C. speakers were more concerned in stating their opposition to the premises which the D.R.C. hold or were supposed to hold than in themselves formulating the theological principles on which they themselves stand. It was perhaps one of the great weaknesses of the Conference that there does not seem to have been an interchange of papers beforehand, so that at times, as will appear, the lack of common ground is patent.

It is necessary to remind our readers straight away that one is dealing with a Church that has a strong doctrinal foundation: "For us the whole Bible is God's Word, and the profession of the truth therein contained has found its expression in the articles of faith of the Church, the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dordrecht. . . . Our interpretation of the pronouncements of God's Word is made on a doctrinal basis" (Brink). Their attitude to the problems of the present day is not empirical, but in the light of formulæ that can be deduced from this rigid doctrinal background. Hence it is possible for them, in all sincerity, to quote the Deity as the Maker of separations with an argument drawn from the Tower of Babel (Genesis xi. 6, 7, 8). "There can be no doubt that God willed the separate existence of nations, and that even in the Church of Christ, as it exists here in its initiated form, the Gospel did not abolish the differences in endowment, nature, culture, etc., between the different groups. Any attempt to ignore this will be an attempt to build another Tower of Babel" (Brink).

Moreover, there is with them a very firm distinction drawn between

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the Missionary or Evangelizing duty of the Church and the much wider and diffuse function of the State: "If the Church should attempt to penetrate to the field of the State, it may lose its way and its calling. . . . To demand of the Church, however, that the existing inequalities should be abolished is unfair" (Meiring). And again, "It is further the task of the Christian Church to proclaim the Kingdom of God. . . . But to demand from the Church of Christ that it itself should prescribe rules governing the political relations of races and groups is to demand too much. It is no more the duty of the Church to say what form the constitution should take than it is the task to state what should be the final racial policy of the country" (Brink).

One has only to reflect for one moment to realize how alien this is to the current Anglican and Free Church attitudes to-day where the stress is laid on the social implications of the Gospel with the frequent identification of Democracy with the Kingdom of God.

Dr. B. B. Keet firmly grasped the nettle in the opening address of the Conference. The passage justifies quotation in full if only to lament that it could not be followed up at this Conference since no one presumably knew what he was going to say: "I take it for granted that the purpose of this Conference is, firstly, to explore the possibility of finding a common approach by . . . the Afrikaans and English churches to the problem of our attitude towards the coloured peoples of our land. That there are differences of conception cannot be denied—differences that become very apparent in our ecclesiastical practice. Whether these differences are so great that there can be no thought of co-operation between us will become clear at this Conference. . . . Secondly, in our discussions we are primarily concerned with matters affecting *the Church*. Political, economic, social and other implications will follow and are dependent upon them. It would, in other words, be futile for us to try and point the way that should be followed with regard to race relations in other spheres if all is not well in our own."

Yet to a great extent this is exactly what happened. First things first is a very sound guide if you happen to be unanimous as to what things are first. It is doubtful if any single Conference has ever revealed such a fundamental cleavage of interpretation on this point. But it augurs well for a future Conference that these differences could be so frankly stated, and stated, let it be said at once in every instance, in such a spirit of charity with a deep humility as regards each one's own Confession.

The Ven. R. P. Rouse, speaking for the Anglican Church, sees the necessity for a theological approach to these problems: "The answers which the Church must give to the difficulties which face a community in which she bears witness must be theological answers," adding the acknowledgment that there are differences of interpretation. He then goes on to say some very fine things about opportunity for progress for every man in a Christian society and condemns any race that would claim it is God's will that any other race must be for ever in subordination; a thesis which the D.R.C. would strenuously deny it was their intention to maintain: "I refuse to believe that it is beyond the range of possibility in the sphere of politics for our statesmen to devise ways and



means whereby their inalienable rights can be secured for all without endangering the preservation of our spiritual heritage" (Keet). The Archdeacon has, however, stated the principle which should help greatly as a basis for further discussion and with which the D.R.C. would find itself in complete agreement: "Christians must advance by the Christian way and not necessarily by so-called civilized ways, or even their own ways. In the Kingdom of God it is not civilization that is important; it is Christianity."

The impression one gets on reading the papers of the Free Churchmen is that they are not relevant to the problem as the Dutch Reformed Church sees it. "We have not gone very far in applying our fundamental Christian principles when we cannot subscribe, without reservation, to the Charter of Human Rights" (Webb). Or as another example: "We talk glibly of the 'will of the people', and no matter how cultured, civilized, educated and *even Christian* the African may be, we exclude him with deliberate calculation" (Heap). The italics are ours, for I believe that there lies the crucial difference of approach. To the D.R.C. humanism is not enough, and Christianity cannot thus tag itself on to motives which may or may not in themselves be Christian. I do not believe that the D.R.C. would subscribe to the fact that even the Charter of Human Rights was *necessarily* Christian. "Modern humanism, which desires to make the Fatherhood of God and the childhood of man of universal application, here steals a weapon out of the arsenal of the Christian Church, just as rationalism once gathered up the Christian values of liberty, equality and fraternity, applying them to its own purposes by giving them its own unscriptural interpretation" (Brink).

I do not know whether Mr. Tingsten would call this theory preposterous. It is certainly very widely held and cannot be met simply by reiterating the premises which the D.R.C. consider invalid. The task of the next Conference calls for the prayers of all men of goodwill that these tensions may be resolved by the Spirit of Wisdom and Love.

Papers quoted:—BRINK: "The Fundamental Principles of the Mission Policy of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Church in South Africa," by the Rev. C. B. Brink, Moderator of the Synod. MEIRING: "How far have we progressed in the application of Christian Principles in our Multi-Racial Country?" by the Rev. A. M. Meiring, Assessor, D.R.C. of the Transvaal. KEET: Introductory Address, by Dr. B. D. Keet, Professor at the Theological Seminary, Stellenbosch. ROUSE: "Some Fundamental Christian Principles," by the Ven. R. P. Rouse, Archdeacon of Johannesburg. WEBB: Fundamental Christian Principles: to what extent have we succeeded in applying them in South Africa?" by the Rev. J. B. Webb, Chairman of the Transvaal District of the Methodist Church of South Africa. HEAP: "Obstacles to the Fuller Application of Fundamental Christian Principles in our Multi-Racial Land," by the Rev. L. Heap, Chairman Congregational Union of South Africa. (With acknowledgments to the *South African Outlook* from December, 1953, to April, 1954, in which all the above papers were printed.)

# A NOTABLE ANNIVERSARY— BISHOP SAMUEL CROWTHER

By G. F. S. GRAY\*

**T**ILL 1951 there was in the twentieth century no African diocesan bishop of the Anglican Communion; and we think of Africa as the youngest of the continents. So it is interesting to recollect that both the first Anglican clergyman of non-European stock, and the first non-European Anglican bishop, should have come from Africa—both of them, indeed, from West Africa. We refer, in the first place, to Philip Kwaku, who was made deacon (he was never priested) in 1765, and worked for many years as both colonial chaplain and mission priest on the Gold Coast, and was connected with the S.P.G.; and in the second place to Samuel Adjai Crowther, whose connexions were with the C.M.S. The nineteenth anniversary of his consecration falls on St. Peter's Day of this year, so it is fitting that he should be remembered at this time.

Who was Crowther? He was born in about 1806 at Oshogun, in what is now the western district of Nigeria, and twelve hundred miles east of Sierra Leone. The town, Oshogun, where Crowther's family lived, was in 1821 destroyed by Fula slave raiders; Crowther's father was probably killed fighting for his tribe and his home; Crowther himself, his mother, and his two younger sisters were all enslaved, and were soon separated. During the next few months Crowther had in succession no fewer than five owners, all Africans; most of them bartered him for tobacco or rum. Finally, what the fifteen-year-old boy most feared happened—he was sold to the Portuguese slave traders in Lagos (not yet under British rule), to be transported overseas. In Lagos he was chained in a slave-shed on the site where St. Paul's Church now stands.

Crowther was shipped as one of a cargo of a hundred and eighty-seven slaves destined for Cuba or Brazil. The very day after the slave ship sailed it met one of the British warships which patrolled the African coast in the attempt to stop the slave trade. To Crowther and his companions, as to so many other African slaves, the Royal Navy brought, though at first they could not believe it, freedom; on 17th June, 1822, they were landed at Freetown, Sierra Leone, the settlement established by the British for freed slaves.

Crowther, or rather Adjai, as he was then called, was sent to a school started by the C.M.S., and quickly showed unusual intelligence; and he was taught carpentry and other handwork by J. W. Weeks, who later became the second bishop of Sierra Leone. Adjai learnt about Christianity, and was baptised on 11th December, 1825; he took at baptism the name Samuel, and afterwards used also the surname Crowther, after a London incumbent named Samuel Crowther, whom he himself had, of course, never met, but who had been Mrs. Weeks' vicar.

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Crowther was the first African bishop of any Communion, except for a negro from the Congo, a descendant of the royal house there, who, after being educated in Portugal and at Rome, was about 1700 appointed the Roman Catholic Bishop of San Salvador, but died before reaching his diocese.

Next year one of his masters took him to England—the first of many visits ; for some months he attended a Church school in Islington. In 1827 he went back to Sierra Leone. In that year Fourah Bay College was started, and Crowther was one of the first six students there. Afterwards he was for a time a schoolmaster, and then a tutor at the college. He married in 1829 a woman teacher, who was, like himself, a freed slave ; they had one son and one daughter.

When Fowell Buxton in 1841, in order to attack the slave trade at its source, and open Africa both to Christianity and to legitimate commerce, sent a big expedition to explore the river Niger, Crowther and a European were sent by the C.M.S. as its representatives with the expedition. Treaties were concluded with several chiefs, committing them to suppress the slave trade and human sacrifice and promote lawful commerce. But the venture was on the whole a failure, and forty-two out of a hundred and fifty white men taking part in it died within two months.

Crowther was sent to Islington College in 1842, and on Trinity Sunday, 11th June, 1843, he was ordained deacon by the Bishop of London, Blomfield ; in October he was priested ; he was in great demand as a preacher, but quickly returned to Sierra Leone.

Shortly before this the remnant of the Egbas, Crowther's tribe, had come together, and founded the new town of Abeokuta. Some of the freed slaves in Sierra Leone, who originally came from that area, hearing of this Egba revival, themselves went there. After a while they wrote to Sierra Leone, asking that a mission should be sent, and in answer the C.M.S. sent two Europeans and Crowther. Owing to the death of the friendly chief of Abeokuta and ensuing wars, they were delayed some time in Lagos, and reached Abeokuta only in 1846. There, within a month, Crowther met his mother ; she had long been a slave, though never sold to the white slave traders and exported ; eventually she had been ransomed by her two daughters. Eighteen months later she was one of the first six to be baptized there, and, as mother of Samuel, took the name Hannah. Crowther had been able for this occasion to translate the baptism service into Yoruba.

Crowther continued to work in Western Nigeria (to give it the later name). The people of Abeokuta were apt to enslave other Africans, and Crowther had to ransom his brother and two sisters and their children. In 1851 he came on a visit to England. There were as yet no other African clergy, nor had any Chinese or Japanese yet been ordained, so that Crowther, the African priest, was a most unusual figure. He was received both by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, and by Lord Palmerston, the Foreign Secretary, all of who were greatly interested both in Crowther as a man and in what he told them of Africa. He also, six years before Livingstone's famous appeal in the Senate House, addressed a meeting of undergraduates at Cambridge, and appealed to them to help the infant Church in Africa. He had already translated

parts of the Bible and the Prayer Book into Yoruba, the chief language of Western Nigeria.

In 1854 Crowther went with a small but successful expedition which explored the Niger, and found that it was easily navigable for hundreds of miles. Three years later the C.M.S. sent the first Christian mission, composed entirely of Africans, to the Niger territories, with Crowther in charge. Crowther had urged that such an enterprise should be undertaken, and on the expedition in 1854 had done valuable preparatory work on the languages used along the river, making long lists of words and phrases. The plan was that teachers should be posted at various places along the Niger, such as Onitsha, and that Crowther should then go on to Sokoto, in the far north, of what is now Northern Nigeria; but the steamer was wrecked, and it proved impossible to reach Sokoto. Onitsha, however, became the centre of the new Ibo mission, and an African priest and catechist were stationed there. Crowther himself travelled continually, both by steamer on the Niger, the most convenient form of transport, and overland. The mission steadily advanced, although at Rabba in the north work had to stop owing to Moslem opposition.

Several young Europeans were sent to West Africa to work under Crowther, but only two of them got as far as the Niger, and they were at once struck down by malaria—one died, while the other one was invalided to England. It seemed that the climate on the Niger was impossible, as things were then, for Europeans.

So the Secretary of the C.M.S., Henry Venn, conceived the idea of an African bishop, who could be none but Samuel Crowther, for a purely African Mission. The C.M.S. missionaries in West Africa gravely doubted the expediency of this proposal, but Archbishop Longley warmly supported the scheme and commended it to the Government. The Queen's licence was accordingly issued to the Archbishop to consecrate Crowther as Bishop of the United Church of England and Ireland in the West African territories beyond the British dominions. The University of Oxford conferred on him a doctorate of divinity on the strength of his Yoruba translations and a Yoruba grammar compiled by him. Crowther is said to have shown remarkable simplicity and a combination of humility and self-possession. His consecration was on St. Peter's Day, 29th June, 1864; bishops were consecrated at the same time for Peterborough and Tasmania. Archbishop Longley was the chief consecrator, and Crowther was presented to him by Bishop Sumner of Winchester and Bishop George Smith of Hongkong. Special trains were run for the occasion from London and elsewhere. The naval officer who had rescued Crowther from slavery was present at the consecration.

On his way back Crowther priested the colonial chaplain, an African, at Cape Coast Castle on the Gold Coast. He took up his residence for the time at Lagos, and paid a visit of some months at least each year to the mission centres on the Niger, depending on when there was a chance of a passage on a steamer—the days of regular commercial steamers on the Niger were not yet. He gradually enlarged the staff of the mission, and by 1871 had ordained his son and eight others.



On the Upper Niger the two main centres of the mission were at Onitsha and Lokoja. But in the Niger Delta also Crowther saw to the task of Christian evangelism; in 1864 he sent a schoolmaster from Sierra Leone to start a mission at Bonny, and later a centre was also founded on the Brass river. On one occasion (in 1867) Crowther and his son were seized and imprisoned by a hostile chief near the Niger, who thought Crowther must be very rich and could pay £1,000 ransom; through the help of the British Consul he escaped, no ransom being paid.

In 1877 Crowther visited England, and secured the gift of a light steamer for his work on the Niger—a most useful acquisition; previously he had depended for transport on canoes and chance trading ships. An English layman named Ashcroft was next year sent with her to manage her and also the mission accounts. In the same year, 1878, two African clergy, his son, D. C. Crowther, and another, Henry Johnson, were appointed by Crowther as his archdeacons.

The Church was now growing greatly, but it was easier than it had formerly been to be a Christian, and many Church people lived unsatisfactory lives. In some places nominally Christian white traders set a demoralizing example. The African clergy and catechists, working in lonely places where much of the background was, to say the least, unhelpful, needed supervision and encouragement which it was not always easy to give them. Charges of misbehaviour were being brought against them. Crowther was now well over seventy and could no longer travel so incessantly as he had once done. So a committee was set up at Lagos with a view to improving the administration of the diocese; this committee consisted of Crowther himself, the two archdeacons, and four Europeans (one of whom was to be secretary and to have a good deal of authority—for example, to visit the various Church centres). Some charges were found to be false or exaggerated, but there appears to have been a widespread laxity and lack of devotion. The very kindness of Crowther's nature perhaps made for some laxity in administration. There was enough that was unsatisfactory to make the C.M.S. committee in London unhappy, and early in 1881 Bishop Crowther, his son the Archdeacon, two other African clergymen and two Europeans were summoned from Lagos to confer with the Lay Secretary of the C.M.S. at Madeira. Even then, in the judgment of the historian of the C.M.S., Dr. Eugene Stock, the evils on the river were underestimated and the remedies agreed on were inadequate.

However, an English clergyman, whom Crowther himself ordained in England in 1882, was sent to live in one of the centres on the Niger. This man soon resigned, finding that the London committee could not accept his views. Two other English clergy were sent in succession in his place. In 1889 the Niger work was reorganized and divided into two missions: both, of course, remaining under Crowther's episcopal supervision: that on the Upper Niger was to be the responsibility in the first place of English missionaries, while the more advanced Church on the Lower Niger and in the Delta was to remain in part the responsibility of African clergy, though three Europeans were also assigned to it.

Next year, however, when the new committee in charge of the mission, comprising the Bishop, the Archdeacon, another African priest and

several European missionaries, met, the result was a regrettable crisis: there was fundamental disagreement between the Europeans, on the one hand, and the Africans on the other, in regard to both policy and personnel; the whites took a much stricter line in regard to the delinquencies of which several workers had been guilty, and they dismissed a number. The London committee confirmed some of these actions and reversed others, and disappointed both Crowther and the missionaries in Nigeria by its mediating attitude. Dr. Stock holds that the young missionaries were certainly too severe in their judgment of the African workers, and not patient enough with those who, like Bishop Crowther, honestly differed from them. The Church in the Delta bitterly resented the drastic dismissals, and for a considerable time, while accepting the episcopal supervision of Crowther's successors, had no connexion with the C.M.S.. It was later admitted that the policy of pruning and purification had been too drastic, and some of the church workers who had been hastily dismissed were afterwards restored.

Crowther died as the result of a paralytic stroke on the last day of 1891 at the age, it was believed, of about eighty-five. His death was probably hastened by anxiety and disappointment. The Governor and most of the chief European officials were present at his funeral.

So ended what may fairly be called a bold and noble experiment. It had not been entirely successful, and though many shrank from such a seemingly retrograde step, Crowther was succeeded by an English diocesan with two African assistant bishops. Nor was there another African diocesan bishop in the Anglican Communion till 1951.

Crowther had a very strong constitution, and so could not only live where Europeans then usually quickly died, but could work hard and over a very long life. He advocated what he called the Gospel and the Plough, or the introduction of industry and commerce, and the improvement of agriculture, as well as the Faith narrowly understood. When he arrived in Onitsha in 1857 the inhabitants, he wrote, were in a state of downright idleness; they had months of semi-starvation, when they were content to live on wild fruits and edible plants. Under his guidance the cultivation of cassava plants and other fruit trees was introduced, and one of his clergy took great pains to teach the Onitsha people to raise a second crop of Indian corn and to make more of their yams.

As an African, Crowther could enter into the minds and feelings of his African clergy and Church people as probably no European could have done. He was a great African patriot, and was convinced that if Africa was to be won for Christ this could only be through the service of her own sons; but he recognized that the help of men and money from overseas was still needed.

But his diocese covered a vast area. He was let down by a number of his clergy and catechists. These lived lonely and isolated lives, and it was only too easy for them to fail, to become slaves of drink or sexual irregularity, or to devote themselves to trade rather than their proper sacred calling. Two of them, one of whom had actually been dismissed three years before at Onitsha in 1882, were found to be guilty of the murder of a girl. Perhaps the arrangements for their supervision and visitation could have been more adequate; but the difficulties of travel



were then very great. Crowther was already fifty-eight when he was consecrated, and one cannot but wonder whether part of the trouble was not due simply to the fact that, for lack of an obviously suitable African successor, he remained in charge of the diocese longer than would otherwise have been desirable.

Crowther was much hurt by what he felt the lack of consideration, and even interference with his proper province as bishop of the diocese, shown by some at least of the missionaries. If it seems, as to-day it may seem, that the C.M.S. in London sometimes tended to keep him in leading strings, it has to be remembered that they were only treating him as they would have treated any English bishop in similar circumstances. Rightly or wrongly, the C.M.S. has never upheld episcopal autocracy, not maintained that a bishop, right or wrong, must always be deferred to. Moreover, it is interesting, because the reverse of what might have been expected, that both at the time of his appointment, and much later, when discipline in the diocese had become thoroughly slack, the London committee were more sympathetic to him and had more confidence in him than the missionaries in Nigeria.

If he lacked administrative ability, Crowther certainly possessed many other at least equally important qualifications—good sense, judgment, real goodness, tact, an absence of self-importance. It was quite in character when he wrote in 1884 to the C.M.S. Secretary in London urging the Society to send as many missionaries as it could, to be the chief workers under the superintendence of the European secretary. He wrote rather pathetically, "The Europeans are better managers, and their actions and report will be better confided in both out here and in England." At times in his later years he grew sad and depressed and offered to resign, but the C.M.S., to its credit, dissuaded him from this.

To-day there are in Nigeria six Anglican dioceses, three of them under African diocesan bishops, with over three hundred clergy, almost all of them Africans, and over three hundred thousand baptized Anglicans (three times as many as there are in China and Japan together). Before the diocese of the Niger was divided in 1951 it was said to contain more churches than any diocese in England. This Nigerian Church is largely the result of Bishop Crowther's work. If on the Upper Niger the visible result of his work was small, the strong Church in the Delta and elsewhere is a monument of his single-minded devotion and perseverance. No one had ever questioned the sincere goodness and deep devotion of his life, his unselfishness and readiness to be at everyone's service. As Stock writes, "If Crowther was an Eli in exercising discipline too lightly, he was an Eli also in simplicity and sincerity of character." He was indeed a great man. The chiefs looked on him as their father and adviser, and his influence was far greater than that of any missionary who ever worked in Nigeria. He has an honoured place in the building of the African Church, and indeed of the Church throughout the world.

# “THE GENIUS OF CHRIST”— A MUSLIM ESTIMATE

Review by KENNETH CRAGG\*

A POPULAR book about Jesus by an Egyptian man of letters which reputedly sells 200,000 copies in nine months after publication is evidently an event of some importance for the Christian observer. ‘Abbās Mahmūd al-‘Aqqād, the author of *‘Abqariyyat-al-Masih*, published in January, 1953, is a well-known writer in Cairo whose books and articles have been widely read and much esteemed. His latest work is at once a significant and tantalizing production—significant in that it offers a Muslim tribute to Christ based on some study of the Christian Gospels themselves, tantalizing in that it either evades or misses the deepest questions implicit in such study. It is thus a rare enough phenomenon to be welcomed and at the same time disappointing enough to inspire a wistful regret about its omissions and the reasons offered for them.

Muslim studies in the New Testament have been infrequent enough, despite the obvious importance of the contents of the New Testament for the claims and teachings of Islam. A religion that believes itself both final and universal has evident and inclusive apologetic obligations towards all other faiths, which it claims both to perfect and to supersede. This is still further imperative in the case of Islam and Christianity, seeing that the faith of Muhammad has crucial relations to the person of Christ and the meaning and origin of His mission in the world. Yet this Muslim duty of scholarship and study *vis-à-vis* Christianity has been inadequately recognized and undertaken within Islam. The most vocal Muslim treatment of Christianity is probably that of the Ahmadiyya movement—divided since 1915, into two sections, the Qadiānī branch differing from the Lahore branch in its interpretation of the claims of the founder Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad and his relation to the orthodox heritage as a “mujaddid” or renewer. But both groups have been for the most part militant against Christian faith and have sought to go beyond both the teachings and attitudes of orthodoxy in their disqualifying of Christian beliefs about Jesus Christ. Though they have written profusely about the New Testament, their discussion has rarely been sustained by open-mindedness or objectivity.

For the rest there have been few efforts on the part of Muslim scholars since Sayyid Admad Khān’s incomplete Bible Commentary—which in fact only reached Genesis XI (though the Introduction was valuable), to come to grips with Biblical studies. We still await in Islam the wealth and intensity of scholarship, equipped with knowledge of original languages, that Christian scholars have tried to bring to the study of the Qur’an and Tradition and Islamic origins. This is not to say, however,

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that certain Muslims have not interested themselves in Christian Biblical criticism, particularly as the view of some critics in the extreme stages of that criticism coincided substantially with the traditional Muslim account of Jesus. There is much that is similar between the hypothetical "Jesus of history" prophet of Galilee, whom St. Paul, among others, magnified, or "distorted," into the Christ of faith, and the Muslim 'Isā, human prophet and preacher, whose Gospel was a book of words, alone, not an initiative of Divine grace in the redemption of the world. Muhammad 'Alī, for example, the noted Indian Khilafatist leader in Islam, records in his autobiography how he found much to attract him as a Muslim in the nineteenth century critics of Nicene Christianity as a Pauline perversion of Galilean simplicity. But while such examples could easily be multiplied, it is rarer to find Muslim thinkers attending to the consensus of New Testament scholarship. It would be well if Muslim scholars could be encouraged to listen-in to New Testament scholarship in its cumulative recognition of the inadequacy of the old hypotheses of New Testament research.

This book by no means marks such a new alertness. But it may mark a new stage in Muslim interest in the central figure of the New Testament. Its limitations will be quickly apparent. It is in the first place a popular work in a series called *Kitāb al-Yaum*—The Book of Today, selling for ten piastres. Its format and paper are a handicap to all but the price. Footnotes are very few and there is a certain casualness about the quotations from the Gospels. Some are taken directly from the Beirut Arabic Bible—the Eli Smith-Van Dyke version: others not so. From time to time a semi-paraphrase form is used: "He upon whom be peace (a formula of Muslim reverence for Christ) after He had fasted forty days and forty nights in the wilderness hungered . . ."—the Muslim phrase passing freely into the quotation. Some verses are identified by Chapter only, some not at all. Nor does the author in his argumentation show wide acquaintance with the phases and theories of New Testament interpretation, though he does cite numbers of Western scholars particularly in respect of the concept of Messiah in history. Occasionally a name is transliterated into Arabic when there is in fact a valid Arabic form (cf. "James" and "Herod"). Though the name Jesus is not suppressed where it occurs in quotations from the Arabic New Testament, the author usually refers in his own writing to Jesus as "the Lord Christ," or "the great apostle," or "the apostle evangelist," or "the apostle of mercy," besides the title "He upon Whom be peace," already mentioned. It is worthy of note, however, that he does not greatly utilize the Qur'anic name for Jesus, current in Islam to this day—'Isā, ibn Maryam: a name which for a reason never satisfactorily explained was transferred from the Esau of the Old Testament to Christ.

Further clues to the popular and general character of the author's work may be gained from a consideration of his career. 'Abbās al-'Aqqād, now in his middle sixties, is not primarily a man of the schools. Born of Kurdish mother and an Egyptian father, he received only a primary education in Assuan. But his private studies and bent as a writer made him a successful journalist, popular in Syria and Iraq, as well as Egypt. His earliest ventures in publication in the nineteen-

twenties were essays calculated to link letters with life and to assert the place of literature in national greatness. He ranges over many topics both Muslim and Western, pleading for a more critical and constructive approach to Arabic literature which has for too long been frivolous and diversionary when it should have been creative and liberating. He has also written volumes of poetry, as well as a study of Egyptian poets of the past. His most popular works are a series of three biographies devoted to the Prophet Muhammad, the second Caliph 'Umar and the famous Muslim general Khālid. They each bore the title "‘Abqariyyat" (Genius or Excellence), given to the present account of Christ. These three were published in rapid succession in 1942, 1943 and 1944. The most important, *‘Abqariyyat Muhammad*, is perhaps not accurately described as a biography. It is rather a eulogy, setting forth the Prophet as an exemplar of the virtues after which sincere men strive and the supremely great figure in all history. His greatness extends to all the realms of human life—"a great Prophet, a great hero, a great man." Muhammad the Preacher, the Commander, the Ruler, the Master, the Husband, the Man are the themes of his exposition. No event in history since Muhammad's day has been what it would have been if Muhammad had never appeared. Without him America would not have been discovered, nor would the French Revolution have occurred. Before him, human history is one thing, after him another. This superlative presentation does not face the metaphysical problems it raised. It does nothing to reconcile the historical particularity with the claim to universal exemplariness. Nor does it enter theologically into the view of revelation or history upon which the faith proceeds. It is indeed eulogy, not examination, panegyric not scholarship; despite the fact that as the author remarks in his Introduction, it is the product of thirty years of intention.

‘Abbās al-‘Aqqād does not say how long his book on Christ has been maturing in his mind. Nor does he outline how he conceives of its relation to its predecessors in the series beyond the common title. He has between the two books also published a popular life of Mahatma Gandhi, which does not, however, bear the title of the series. There is no mistaking his interest in personalities who are pivotal in history, and it is from this angle that he approaches the study of Christ. The ground was less familiar than that of his own Islam, the approach much more difficult, lying for the most part outside the old securities of assertion and platitude, and beset with acute problems of spiritual criteria. These every thinking Muslim must feel when he ventures out of the limits of the Muslim account of Jesus, into the riches of the Christian tradition, with the added embarrassment of communal tension and cultural difference. The very Arabic of the two Scriptures—the Qur’ān and the Bible—is contrasted in its structure, its vocabulary, its temper. So little have the two faiths achieved any real communication from mind to mind in the centuries of their co-existence. If the average Christian reader must make an effort of sympathy to come near "feeling" the Qur’ān as the Muslim does, the Muslim for his part finds the New Testament disconcertingly strange, with its *four* Gospels where Jesus only had one, and its curious epistles from man to men, strangely comprehended in



what is supposedly revelation. Letters may travel, but what *comes down* by means of them? To the Muslim revelation is always a descent. These and many other obstacles have to be overcome. Though every authentic Muslim believes that reverence for the person of Jesus is an obligation and that, therefore, any study of Him can be regarded as a Muslim pursuit, it becomes something more than a domestic Muslim enterprise—something more than an exercise in which the Muslim is at home—when it takes him to the New Testament and to the figure that claims attention there. It is, therefore, all the more credit when an individual Muslim writer proceeds beyond the perfunctory and unthinking kind of reverence in which Jesus is both held and imprisoned in Islam, and moves into the deeper waters of the New Testament.

But it is Muslim pre-possession which vitiates as well as motivates this effort. The very choice of the title is significant. It is intended to refer only to the teaching capacity of Jesus. At the point where that very teaching came to its supreme climax in the active lesson of the Cross suffered forgivingly, the author draws a line, claiming that questions as to the fact, or the manner, of Jesus' death are no part of its duty or purpose. "Here," he declares, referring to the cleansing of the temple, "the role of history ends and the role of the creed begins." His denial of any relevance to the climax, truncating the Gospels as it does, arises not from any historical validity, but from the Muslim rejection of the Crucifixion as an inconceivable event, it being unthinkable that God should betray His servants to that length. But even if that metaphysical issue be left aside, it is difficult to see how even the teaching "genius" of Christ can be historically estimated in neglect of its climax and in neglect of the long and prior awareness of that climax within the heart of the teaching.

But the attitude towards Jesus which Islam pre-supposes is present throughout, even if its most serious quarrel with history comes at the close. 'Abbās al-'Aqqād divides his book into four parts with subdivisions as follows :

Part I. The Messiah in History, pp. 8-99 : (a) Prophecy among the Children of Israel, pp. 14-19 ; (b) Jewish Sects at the Time of Christ's Birth, pp. 21-37 ; (c) Social and Political Conditions at that Time, pp. 38-47 ; (d) Religious Life in the World in that Age, pp. 48-56 ; (e) Intellectual Life in that Age, pp. 57-68 ; (f) Galilee of the Nations, pp. 69-74 ; (g) The Story of Christ's Birth, pp. 75-90 ; (h) Personal Characteristics of Christ, pp. 91-99.

Part II. The Call or Message of Christ, pp. 101-162 : (a) The Choice of Direction, or *Qiblah*, pp. 107-111 ; (b) The Trials of the Call, pp. 112-117 ; (c) The Law—*Al-Shari'ah*, pp. 119-127 ; (d) The Law of Love, pp. 129-139 ; (e) Ethical Life, pp. 141-149 ; (f) The Kingdom of Heaven, pp. 151-162.

Part III. The Means or Instruments of the Call, pp. 164-197 : (a) The Power of the Master, pp. 165-175 ; (b) The Disciples, pp. 177-189 ; (c) The Gospels, pp. 191-197.

Part IV. The Conclusion, pp. 199-216 : The end beyond every Conclusion, pp. 218-223.

A glance will show that almost a third of the book has gone by before

the reader reaches Christ's birth and almost half before he is brought to the heart of the matter in the actual preaching or Gospel of Jesus in Galilee. The introductory sections, though, are not without their interest, not least that in which the author deals with prophecy in Israel. Here he stays within the early manifestations of prophecy in the history of Israel, commenting on the large number of prophetic persons, whom he likens rather to the jurists in Islam in that they provide direction and leadership. He ignores altogether the great writing prophets—whom the Qur'an also ignores—but in whom none the less the deepest Messianic expectations are to be found. The account of religious, intellectual and social conditions before the birth of Christ is evidence of the author's wide reading and desire for factual data. It is sad that this concern for history is not operative in the sequel to the story. For factual data as to the consequences of Christ's "genius" are no less relevant and no less ample than those relating to the world into which He came. But this work is not interested in Church history as in any way a clue to the meaning of Christ, despite the interesting and sound emphasis which it lays upon the disciples during the period of Christ's ministry.

In examining the Galilean setting of that ministry the author lays stress on the basic difference historically between Galilee and Judæa, claiming the Galilean accent as a kind of Aramaic spoken by a large proportion of the people of Galilee whom he describes as "Arabs." He cites various Gospel passages as indicative of tension and diversity between the two regions—a factor of basic importance subsequently in the termination of Christ's ministry. The birth of Jesus, the date of which is discussed over several pages, occurred in Galilee. His historical existence is vindicated against considerations based on the almost total silence of non-Christian sources, by the simple insistence on the fact of Christians in such numbers so soon afterwards. The author also considers that whatever may or may not be said about differences between the Gospels, there is a sure token of the actuality of Christ's teaching in the fact that it criticized all the prevailing sects of the time without identifying itself with any in its scrutiny of each.

'Abbās al-'Aqqād believes he has found the clue to the personality of Christ in a characteristic common to all prophets and servants of God. It is the struggle through uncertainty and testing into the discipline of assurance. The Divine will is discovered by wrestling with events and circumstances, and it is followed by a disciplined obedience. The pattern of His ministry is that it begins as a popular movement and ends as a message of universal humanity. It begins in a mood of conservatism and ends in a strong conflict with established attitudes. At the outset there is little confidence in the person of the preacher, but at the end there is no limit to the assurance of his followers and disciples about His person. It may be questioned perhaps whether the writer has not mistaken the real current of Jesus' ministry which was one of decreasing external following, leading into the utter loneliness and apparently total failure of the Cross. He does recognize, none the less, the battle within Christ's soul over the meaning of despair and its relation to God's will. His discussion of the character of Christ ends movingly on this note. Despair itself was not something from which to seek escape, but rather



something to surrender to God that the way of rescue may be His alone, the true security lying in what God wills. The drinking of the cup is the way of faith. It is sad that the writer does not obey this insight in its relevance to the Cross he decides to exclude from his account.

Meanwhile he sees in the Christian message a phenomenon appearing in response to the needs of the time, which were broadly those created by rigidity of religious and social life and by the evil nature of the relations between nations and sects, especially in the part of the world we now know as the Near East. To this diseased and misguided world came the message that whoever gains all at the cost of his soul is surely loser: that the kingdom of heaven is within the soul. 'Abbās al-'Aqqād declares in the chapter entitled *Al-Da'wah* (the Call or Message) that the Gospel of Christ, to which He was impelled by the Divine (al-Ghaib) and for which the world waited, "encountered the most powerful opposition that a religion could encounter." Nevertheless, its progress in the world of men is to be explained by the fact that the reasons for its acceptance were superior to the reasons for its rejection. The essence of Christ's call is summed up in the fact that it was a change of direction, the opening of a *qiblah*.

To this idea the writer devotes a whole chapter. The *qiblah* in Islam is the direction in which the Muslim prays. Originally Jerusalem, it came, shortly after the Hijra of Muhammad to Medina, to be Mecca, the home of the sacred *Ka'abah*. To that central magnet of their devotion all Muslims pray. The choice of the service of God and the repudiation of the service of Mammon is the essential decision with which the call of Christ confronted men. There is no minimizing its costliness, for it enters into every part of life, so that a man's foes may be those of his own household. But the choice is clear. Using another metaphor from the mosque, Al-'Aqqād refers to the *mihrah* of Mammon, the coveted things of this world which draw men's thoughts and impulses towards the materialist *qiblah*. Muslim terminology is likewise used in the subsequent section, following a brief discussion of the contrast between John "the washer" and Jesus; this section is headed, *Al-Shari'ah*, and the author expounds the law of the Kingdom as proclaimed by Christ. He derives the message of Christ from contemplation of the peculiar evils and wrongs of contemporary society. It was an age which needed to hear the "woes" pronounced against the rich and the proud and to listen to the benedictions uttered upon the poor and the meek. There is particular stress here on Christ's compassion for woman; it was a time in which women suffered injustice and neglect. Christ's ready proclamation of forgiveness and mercy incurred the hostility of religious authority, since the whole system of laws and punishments was the perquisite of such authority. Its custodians naturally found in Christ's call to repentance and pardon what Al-'Aqqād calls "His greatest offence."

He comments also on the ability of Jesus to give spontaneous and irrefutable answers to questions intended to incriminate Him and cites it as another evidence of His virile personality. The author's exposition of the law of Christ concentrates on its inwardness and idealism, on its hostility to rigidity, formalism and considerations of communal or

personal prestige. He discusses how far our Lord's demands, especially in relation to the renunciation of wealth and desire, are to be taken literally. After noting the *interimsethik* of Schweitzer, he concludes that ascetic discipleship is incumbent on all who would be apostles and disciples in every age, but that others are called upon to recognize that Christ's main purpose was to insist on a right centre (or axis) for life, and that the soul is more important than things.

Much emphasis is laid on the idea that it was opposition to His teaching which produced a widening in the scope of its appeal from an exclusively Jewish interest to a universal range. The writer conjectures that just as Meccan opposition to Muhammad led to the Hijra to Medina and the most formative decisions in Islam, so Jewish resistance to Christ precipitated far-reaching changes in the Gospel. It is this larger call to the individual irrespective of race which the author understands by "the Kingdom of Heaven." He has, however, apparently failed to understand the full significance of the term and refers only to the disparity in its several uses, as indicating sometimes what is present and at hand, and at other times something yet in the far future. But he makes the interesting observation that we may best gauge Christ's concept of the Kingdom from the evident misunderstandings on the part of the disciples, quoting in this connection the familiar passage in Acts I, vv. 6-7. (Page 158: one of the rare occasions where the author quotes from outside the Gospels.) His final comment on "the Kingdom of Heaven" is that only monotheistic teaching is capable of this universal outreach. No paganism ever attains it. It is unfortunate that the author does not relate the significance of the subsequent world-wideness of the Church to the historical meaning of Christ's teaching and to an assessment of His person. The book holds strictly to its plan of debating Christ's place in history from the period of the Gospels only, and that prior to the arrest in the Garden.

Setting out to explain the spread of Christianity, or rather of Christ's teaching, in the world, without reference to Cross or Resurrection, the author is driven back upon two explanations—one that the world was in need of the message at the time it spread, the other that it was prepared to hear it. At the time of Christ's birth the Jewish world was awaiting a messiah and the Gentile world was wistful. But it should be understood that this thirst for and openness to a new creed did not diminish the important role played by the example of Jesus Himself and the fidelity of His disciples. The discussion of these two factors occupies the third main section of '*Abqariyyat al-Masih*. Truly was Jesus called "The Teacher" (Master), well-versed as He was in the Jewish Scriptures and perhaps also conversant with Greek. (Page 166. The suggestion is in line with the author's insistence on the cosmopolitan character of Galilee. It may be conjectured that he is perhaps anxious to minimize the Jewish elements to Jesus' background.) His style of speaking, even in Arabic translation, is impressive in its forcefulness and rhythm. His parables, too, in their variety and vigour, are noteworthy. One can imagine, says the author, how the simple hearers found new thoughts kindling as they listened, while light slowly dispelled the shadows of their ignorance. "There is no message of truth apart from a messenger :



there is no way to establish Christianity save by a Christ. He is the origin, He the pith and essence of the message, and everything beyond Him is addition and development."

But the disciples had their part to play. They were the first believers, and under Christ's tutelage they grew from a little flock to a great community. At the outset they were rather undistinguished. They all came from one environment. (Page 179. The writer seems to have overlooked at this point the obvious disparity between Simon the Zealot and Matthew the publican.) The Master knew their blemishes and did not deceive them as to their roughness and their frailty. Only slowly did He elicit from them the confession as to His messianic identity. There is no reference here, however, to their further education in what the Messianic vocation would involve of suffering and death. Instead the writer discusses the trades followed by the disciples, their commission to preach and heal and their discipline. The preaching of the disciples beyond Palestine, especially in Asia Minor and Alexandria, is discussed without any reference to the intervening events that made the world mission. It is suggested that the way of the disciples in the world of the Gentiles was facilitated by other movements in the previous generation. The issue involving the conservatives and the apostles Peter and Paul is briefly referred to in this same context. Thus the author's treatment of the first disciples and their relation with the Teacher merges imperceptibly into an outline of the progress of the apostolic Church throughout the world of its time. The extension of the faith owed everything to the fidelity and conviction of its servants, whom Christ had sent into the world.

There follows a brief discussion of the four Gospels along traditional lines and embodying certain familiar points of New Testament criticism and study, the *logia*, the source *Q* and the like. 'Abbās al-'Aqqād then turns to the question of the miraculous in religion, holding that it is unwise to dismiss miracles merely on the ground of a scientific attitude that thinks exclusively of natural law and without examining the factors leading to contemporary belief in the miracle. None the less, he professes himself indifferent to the miraculous in the Gospels, since there is sufficient compulsion to belief in the events themselves without it. Cf. the statement on p. 206, "To be reliant on miracle is to be a niggard in faith.") There is no evidence that the miraculous birth of Christ itself induced any to faith in Him. He is in Himself and His personality the supremely wonderful thing. It was this which endured.

The author is thus brought to his conclusion. He attempts a chronological summary of the events of Christ's life from the infancy to the betrayal, making much of the influence of John the Baptist at the outset of the ministry and dwelling on the temptations as representative of the lot of all prophets and as the clue to the whole meaning and nature of the Messianic vocation. There followed the original ministry and Galilee and then the final challenge to Jerusalem. It was obligatory for Him to go to Jerusalem and to do so openly; He could not contemplate a whole retinue of followers forced to stealth and privacy. There was no escape from entanglement with the priestly antagonism in the Holy City. His demeanour and His answers there were in keeping

with His earlier teaching of the Kingdom. They were shamed who tried to provoke Him. "But there ensued," writes Al-'Aqqād, "what cannot but happen when bitter foes of a new message and its devotees, pledged to its propagation and enthusiastic for its leader, confront each other at such a festival." Christ overturned the money-changers' tables and cleansed the temple—a deed which, it would appear, precipitated the climax. But here, says the author, "the role of history ends and that of credal faith begins." As to what follows, history has no sure word to utter. It is said, however, that by illegal processes of trial and condemnation within one night and early morning Christ was condemned and crucified. St. Mark speaks of the third hour, St. John of the sixth. Brief reference is also made to a reported tomb of Jesus in Kashmir. These issues, however, are outside the purpose of the book, which the author limits to a presentation in modern terms of the "genius" of Christ. This purpose is discharged without dubious debate as to how the earthly career of Jesus ended. If Christ were to return to-day He would surely find Scribes and Pharisees among the people who confess and bear His name.

The foregoing summary of the contents of this recent Muslim study leaves several unanswered questions and a great wistfulness for more. The questions surround the attempt to explain the meaning of Christ and the spread of His "Church" in neglect of the events which consummated His meaning and generated His Church—the events of Good Friday and Easter. The wistfulness Abbas Al-'Aqqād creates in the Christian mind is for a Muslim alertness to Jesus in the Gospels, beginning where his ends and carrying the evident reverence and veneration of these pages into those fuller acts of recognition which make, in Al-'Aqqād's own words, "a Christianity according to Christ." For, in the last analysis, must it not be doubted whether "genius" is the right area of thought in which to locate an assessment of Jesus Christ? "Genius" may be supreme human quality; but does not history take us beyond the human when it confronts us with Him? Yet perhaps in the end there is a clue in the very term "abqariyyat" imperfectly translated into the English "genius." For *'Abqarum*, the lexicographers say, was the land of the *genii* or *Jinn*, which no traveller has ever visited and which none can locate in this world. Thus the adjectival *'abqarī* becomes a synonym for the excellent, the wonderful, the inexplicable. "Out-of-this-worldness" might best express the sense for modern ears. Is not the essence of the historic faith about Jesus that He came from without, that in Him the living God interpreted Himself to man and opened the door to forgiven fellowship with Himself? Though gloriously within this world and involved in all our sorrows, the Christ was not of this world. In Him God visited and redeemed humanity. Is it not this Divine achievement which both makes and explains the excellence of Christ? Herein is 'Abqariyyat al-Masih.







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